

Old World Australia Series

TOWN HALLS



DARREN JACKSON
1ST EDITION

**Old World Australia Series
TOWN HALLS
Darren Jackson
1st Edition**

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Front cover: Sydney Town Hall

Back cover: South Melbourne Town Hall (top), Melbourne Town Hall (bottom)

OLD WORLD AUSTRALIA SERIES

This is the first book in a series entitled “Old World Australia Series” where the author proposes to create a whole series of books covering the following topic headings:

- Churches, cathedrals and synagogues
- Town Halls, post offices and world fairs
- Courthouses, forts and military bases, parliaments, treasuries and other premises
- Hospitals and asylums
- Orphanages, female factories and prisons (gaols)
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Fire stations, police stations
- Library, infrastructures, monuments, museums and galleries
- Train stations and trams
- Banks, businesses and financial institutes
- Halls, hotels and sports facilities
- Houses, mansions, palaces and castles
- Shops and retailers
- Theatres and clubs

The purpose of this series to question the official narrative regarding Australia’s settlement and growth.

Old World Australia Series

TOWN HALLS

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INTRODUCTION

This book consists of a collection of 82 Australian Town Halls from the period 1850 to 1920s. The content is primarily photographs with summaries from the earliest Town Halls in 1800s. The official narratives provide dates of when these Town Halls were founded and usually the names of the designer/architect but very few name the builders. Several narratives state that they were built by convicts.

Please research individual Town Halls for their official narrative or for a deeper understanding, that is not the objective of this book. This book is questioning the number and skill set of the given labour pool to build such magnificent architecture, and especially within the time frames suggested, typically within one year, and where did the resources come from, how they were manufactured and transported to work sites.

The official narrative provides questionable descriptions for each Town Hall, especially the build durations, and even more questionable population figures for each city. Very few construction photos exist and those that are available are also questionable. Also ignored, in the official narratives, are climate issues for the immigrant population used to cooler weather. With so many Town Halls built in under one year this ignores the challenges of working through extremely hot summers (up to 40° C) and the freezing cold winters of the southern coast and Tasmania.

History (the official narrative) teaches us that upon arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 Australia had no industry, no infrastructure, no power tools, no forms of transport. The earliest settlers - convicts and military, followed by free settlers - were tasked with finding the resources, setting up these industries, sourcing the tools and equipment to build and manufacturing the transportation (building horse drawn wagons, trams and trains) as well as building the roads and railways to enable these resources to get to the work sites.

The focus of this book is on European settlement of Australia, the population numbers provided omit the indigenous locals. The chapters in this book follow the given narrative on the founding and settling of Australia in sequential order from the earliest to the most recent states but omits the Australian Capital Territory due to its recent creation in 1911 with its capital Canberra:

- New South Wales, founded in 1788 with its capital city Sydney
- Tasmania, founded in 1803 with its capital city Hobart
- Queensland, settled in 1824 with its capital city Brisbane
- Western Australia, founded in 1829 with its capital city Perth
- Victoria, founded in 1835 with its capital city Melbourne
- South Australia, founded in 1836 with its capital city Adelaide
- Northern Territory, settled in 1869 with its capital city Darwin

In each chapter are the most significant and historic Town Halls listed by years built for each state. The purpose of this book is to educate the reader, to invite them to learn more, to ask questions and to come to their own conclusions as to truth of the settling and building of Australia architecture.

1. NEW SOUTH WALES

This chapter consists of Town Halls claimed to be founded in Australia's first settled state, New South Wales between 1871 and 1929, mainly in the capital city Sydney, but also including notable regional towns including Newcastle, Goulburn, Orange, Broken Hill and Albury.

New South Wales's capital city Sydney claims to be Australia's first settled city in 1788 when the first fleet of convicts arrived from England. This location was selected for the transportation of convicts as a penal colony. It is claimed that 1,487 convicts, crew members, soldiers and their families sailed for over 8 months (May 1787 to Jan 1788) on 11 British ships to a country that it is said had no industry and no infrastructure. No food production, no construction facilities, no homes, no buildings, no jobs and of course no prisons (gaols).

The second fleet of 6 ships arrived in Sydney in 1790 with approximately 750 travellers surviving the journey. From its' shaky start Sydney's population is claimed to be approximately 3,000 by 1800 and rose to 19,700 by 1836 (the years prior to Victoria and South Australia, and the influx of prospectors during the Victorian gold rush).

It is claimed that by 1911 Sydney had a population of approximately 629,500, yet no official records exist between 1851 (44,240) and 1911 when most of the state's Town Halls are said to be founded (built). Census records from 1846 to 1881 are said to have been destroyed in the Sydney Garden Palace fire in 1882.

By 1861 Sydney's population is claimed to be around 95,600, rising significantly to 386,900 by 1891. Given the reported destroying of census data for this period these numbers are questionable. The given narrative claims this mass migration, to an unknown country, on the other side of the earth was due to the gold rush. The discovery of gold is quite a convenient way of explaining this growth.

The given population numbers, if accurate, suggest that of the 380,000 residents by 1891 they had the number of builders required, with the skills set and the manufactured resources of stone, bricks, timber, steel/iron, glasses and finishing products in each of these varied locations all over the state to construct these Town Halls, at the same time as all of the infrastructure such as railways, roads and pavements. In addition, the means of transporting these products, of fabricating them without the use of power tools, methods of communicating over long distances to order materials.

New South Wales Main Southern rail line from Parramatta Junction to the Victorian boarder at Albany commenced in 1855 and by 1881 New South Wales was connected to the Victorian Railways network. This started the New South Wales railway network.

1871 Ashfield Town Hall, Ashfield, Sydney, NSW - DEMOLISHED 1970

There is very little official information available on the Ashfield Town Hall. The architect is given as John H Wilson. The Town Hall was demolished in 1970 to make way for the construction of the Ashfield Mall and Civic Centre. No photographs of construction or demolition are available.



1879 Orange Town Hall, Anson Street, Orange, NSW - DEMOLISHED 1976

Orange (founded 1846) is located 270 km from Sydney and would take approximately 63 hours to walk there. The railway line to Orange was opened in 1877. The population in 1851 was 28 people, growing to approximately 1,800 in 1880. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by J. J. Clarke.



1880 to 1882 Waterloo Town Hall, St Johns Street, Sydney, NSW - CLOSED 1972

It is claimed that the Waterloo Town Hall was built within two years and was designed by architect Edward Hughes. The Town Hall closed in 1972 but the building was not demolished.



1879 to 1880 Glebe Town Hall, St Johns Road, Sydney, NSW – FIRE 1988

It is claimed that the Glebe Town Hall was built within one year, then renovated from 1889 to 1891. The Town Hall was designed by Ambrose Thornley Jnr.



1880 to 1882 Petersham Town Hall, Crystal Street, Sydney, NSW - DEMOLISHED 1937

It is claimed that the Petersham Town Hall was built within 18 months by architect Thomas Rowe. The Town Hall was demolished in 1937 because it was more cost effective than to renovate it.



1882 to 1883 Parramatta Town Hall, Parramatta Square, Sydney, NSW

It is claimed that the Parramatta Town Hall was built within two years and designed by George Allan Mansfield.



1882 Randwick Town Hall, Avoca Street, Sydney, NSW

It is claimed that the Randwick Town Hall was built within two years and designed by Blackman and Parkes.



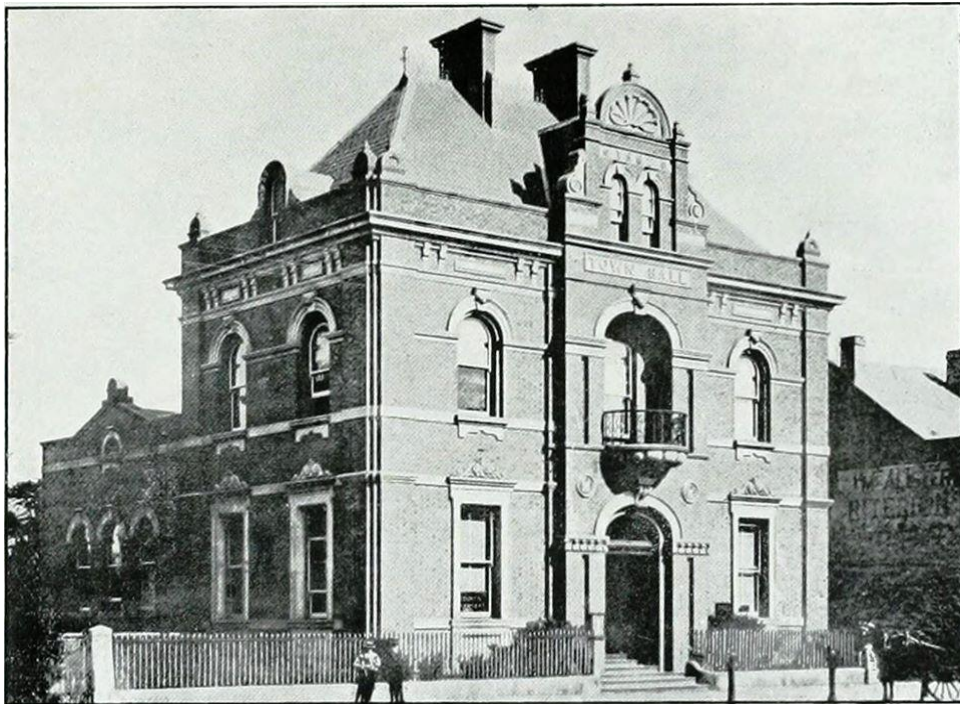
1887 to 1888 Glen Innes Town Hall, Grey Street Glen Innes, NSW

Glen Innes (founded 1852) is located 571 km from Sydney and would take approximately 129 hours to walk there. Alternatively, Glen Innes is 239 km (55 hours walk) from Coffs Harbour on the pacific coastline. The train line was opened in 1884, but is now closed. The population in 1866 was approximately 350 people, growing to approximately 1,500 by 1875. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one and a half years and designed by Frederick Harrison.



1887 Goulburn Town Hall, Auburn Street, Goulburn, NSW

Goulburn (founded 1833) is located 220 km from Sydney and would take approximately 51 hours to walk there. The train line was opened in 1869. The population in 1851 was 28 people, growing to approximately 11,361 in 1890. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Edmund Cooper Manfred.



1888 Balmain Town Hall, Darling Street, Sydney, NSW

It is claimed that the Balmain Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Blackman and Parkes.



1888 to 1889 Granville Town Hall, Carlton St, Sydney, NSW

It is claimed that the Granville Town Hall was built within 17 months and designed by Charles A. Harding.



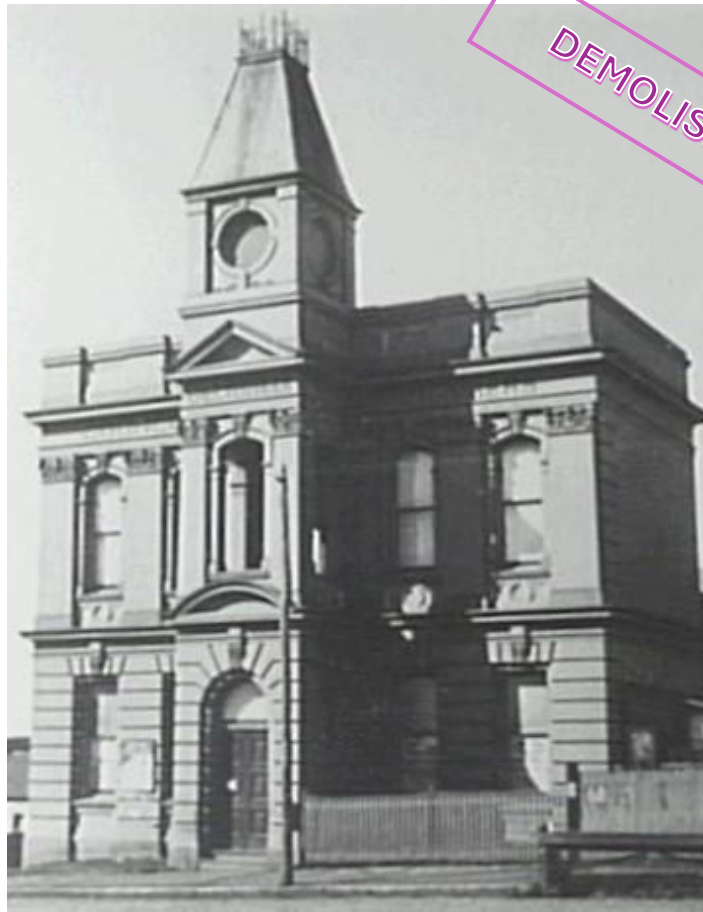
1888 Leichardt Town Hall, Norton & Marion Street, Sydney, NSW

It is claimed that the Leichardt Town Hall was built within 8 months and designed by Drake and Walcott.



1889 Canterbury Town Hall, Canterbury Road, Sydney, NSW - DEMOLISHED 1963

It is claimed that the Canterbury Town Hall was built within one year and designed by W. H. Monckton. The Town Hall was demolished because civic operations moved to another district.



1868 to 1889 Sydney Town Hall, George Street, Sydney, NSW

It is claimed that the Sydney Town Hall was built in two main stages, 1868 to 1878 and 1885 to 1889. The Town Hall was designed by John H. Wilson, Edward Bell, Albert Bond, Thomas Sapsford, John Hennessy, and George McRae. It is also claimed to be built within the former Old Sydney Burial Ground, a cemetery with an estimated 2,000 burials. This is interesting because the Sydney Town Hall railway station and rail line runs under the Town Hall. The railway station opened in 1932 and has six platforms split over two levels.

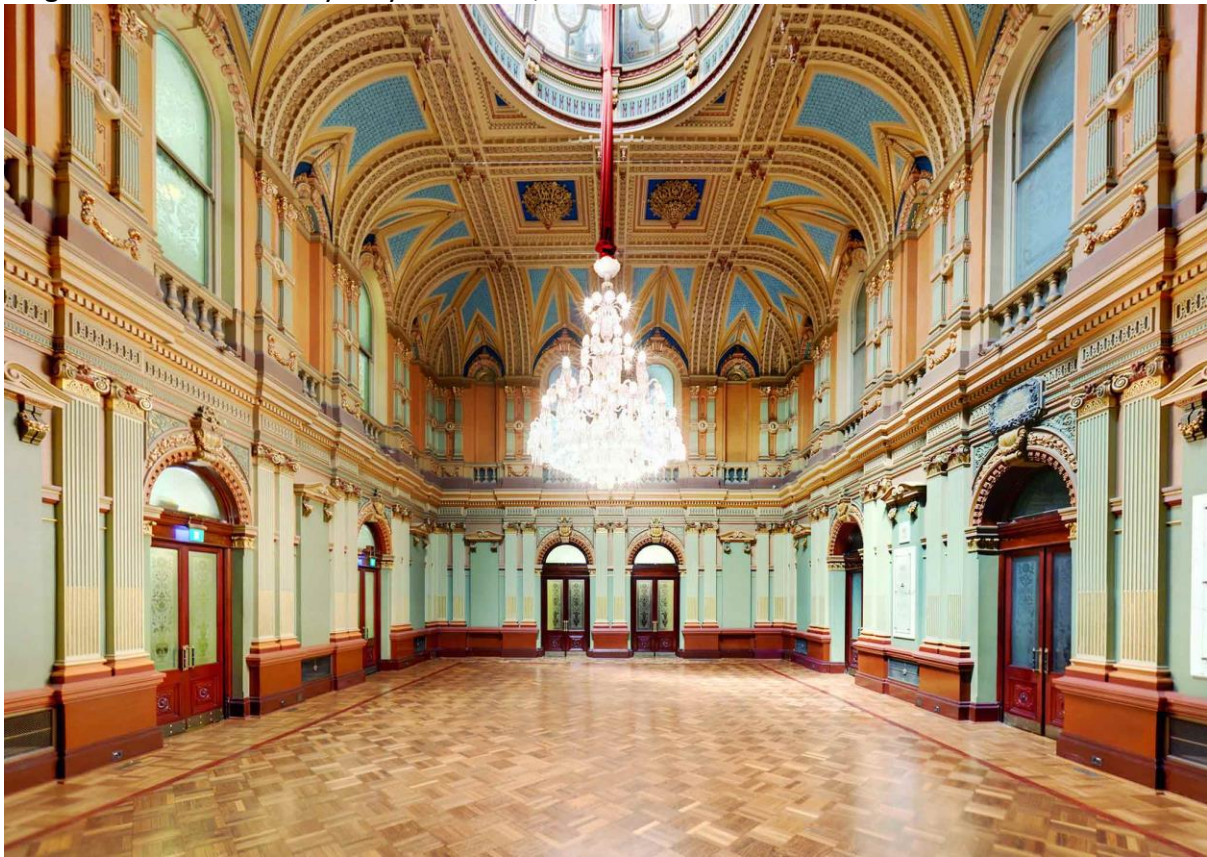


1868 to 1889 Sydney Town Hall, George Street, Sydney, NSW



1868 to 1889 Sydney Town Hall, George Street, Sydney, NSW

Stage 1 – 1868 to 1878 Sydney Town Hall, Vestibule



Stage 2 – 1885 to 1889 Sydney Town Hall, Grand Organ



1890 Broken Hill town Hall, Argent Street, Broken Hill, NSW

Broken Hill (founded in 1883) is located 1,057 km (238 hours walk) inland from Sydney, or 489 km (110 hours walk) from Adelaide. The train line to Broken Hill was completed in 1927. The population in 1890 was approximately 20,000 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Whithall and Wells from Adelaide.



1890 to 1891 Paddington Town Hall, Oxford Street, Sydney, NSW

It is claimed that the Paddington Town Hall was built within one year and designed by architect John Edward Kemp.



1890 Mascot Town Hall, Botany & Coward Street, Sydney, NSW - ABOLISHED 1948

It is claimed that the Mascot Town Hall was built within 7 months and designed by C. Hawkins. The Hall was demolished due to the amalgamation of Mascot and Botany in 1948.



1891 Forbes Town Hall, Town Hall Lane, Forbes, NSW

Forbes (founded in 1861 due to the discovery of gold) is located 386 km (88 hours walk) inland from Sydney, or 116 km (26 hours walk) from Orange. The train line to Forbes was completed in 1893. The population in 1890 is not known but was likely several thousand miners. The Town Hall build time is not known but is estimated to have been less than a year and designed by Gordon McKinnon.



1908 to 1909 Albury Town Hall, Dean Street, Albury, NSW

Albury (founded in 1839) is located 631 km (143 hours walk) inland from Sydney, or 315 km (72 hours walk) inland from Melbourne. The train line to Albury was completed in 1881. The population in 1900 was 14,045 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Gordon McKinnon.



1928 to 1829 Newcastle Town Hall, King Street, Newcastle, NSW

Newcastle (founded in 1804) is located 144 km (31 hours walk) north from Sydney but is located on the pacific coastline. The train line to Newcastle was completed in 1889. The population in 1929 was approximately 150,000 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Henry Eli White.



2. TASMANIA

This chapter consists of Town Halls claimed to be founded between 1864 and 1929 in Australia's second settled state Tasmania. Tasmania was also selected for the transportation of convicts as a penal colony due to its isolated location. First settled by Europeans in 1803 the population is claimed to have grown to 23,500 by 1830 centred on its two largest cities, Hobart (the capital of Tasmania) and Launceston.

At the time of the founding of the first Town Hall in Launceston in 1864, the city had an estimated population of 11,000. The first Hobart Hall that was claimed to be completed in 1866 had a population of 27,629. For reference Tasmania's total population is given as 90,000 people (approximately 55% male, 45% female) in the same year.

Sadly the 1866 Hobart Town Hall was demolished in 1913 due to being classed as outdated and no longer adequate for the growing needs of the city. Hobarts current Town Hall, constructed in 1915 when the population was approximately 40,000 was built to a capacity of 5,000, is still in use today.

The Tasmanian Main Line Railway was built by a private company formed in 1872. The Tasmanian Government purchased the company's assets in 1890 and formed the Tasmanian Government Railways.

1864 to 1867 Launceston Town Hall, St Johns Street, Launceston, Tasmania

It is claimed that the Launceston Town Hall was built within approximately three years and designed by Peter Mills. Estimated population in 1864 was 11,000 people.



1864 to 1866 Hobart Town Hall, Macquarie Street, Hobart, Tasmania

It is claimed that the 1866 Hobart Town Hall was built within two years and designed by Henry Hunter.



1914 to 1915 Hobart City Hall, Macquarie Street, Hobart, Tasmania

It is claimed that the 1915 Hobart City Hall was built within one year and designed by architect (qualification disputed) Raymond “Rusty” N. Butler.



3. QUEENSLAND

This chapter consists of Town Halls claimed to be founded in Australia's third settled state, Queensland between 1864 and 1930, mainly in the capital city Brisbane (founded in 1824), but also including notable regional towns including Townsville, Cairns, Toowoomba, Mackay, Maryborough and Warwick.

Australia's east coastline was navigated by Dutch, French and Spanish explorers before it was claimed by James Cook in 1770 and then further explored in the following decades by the British. Queensland had the largest concentration of indigenous population that declined significantly due to disease and massacres by the British.

Brisbane (then of New South Wales) was selected for a penal colony for the increased numbers of convicts transported to Australia. In 1824 the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement was established at Brisbane and consisted of 29 convicts governed by 14 soldiers. Transportation of convicts to Brisbane ceased in 1839 which led to the closure of the penal settlement. As early as 1842 free settlers were moving to Queensland.

Initially Queensland was a part of New South Wales. Queensland separated from New South Wales in 1859 with a given population of 23,520 that grew to approximately 250,000 by 1883. The reason for this growth is given as interstate migration as settlers moved north from New South Wales.

Queensland's capital city, Brisbane located in the southeast of the state on the Brisbane River is the states' largest and most populace city. Brisbane's population was approximately 5,000 people in 1859 and is claimed to have increased to 12,551 at the time of the construction of the 1864 Brisbane Town Hall. In 1864, the Great Fire of Brisbane destroyed most of Queen Street and caused economic and political problems. Brisbane River burst its banks in 1893, the Black February Flood left most of the city's population homeless.

The first railway built in Queensland ran from Ipswich to Dalby in 1865 and was extended to Gatton in 1866 through multiple tunnels including Victoria Tunnel to Toowoomba in 1867 and to Dalby in 1868. The railway was extended from Ipswich to Brisbane in 1876. The railway network extended north and inlands throughout the 1880s and 1890s.

1861 Ipswich Town Hall, Queensland

Ipswich (founded in 1843) is located 36 kms (8.5 hours walk) inland from Brisbane. Ipswich was connected to the Queensland railway network in 1865. The population in 1861 was approximately 3,600 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall took three years to build and was designed by Hill and Taylor.



1864 to 1865 Brisbane Town Hall, Queen Street, Brisbane, Queensland - DEMOLISHED 1928

It is claimed that the Brisbane Town Hall was not affected by the Great Fire of Brisbane in 1894 that destroyed many buildings on Queens Street, while other sources claim the Town Hall was constructed after the fire. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by William Coote. The Hall was demolished in 1928 because it was too small and did not adequately serve the needs of the enlarged Brisbane.



1886 to 1889 Cairns Town Council Chambers, Abbott Street, Cairns, Queensland

Cairns (founded in 1876) is located 1,700 kms north of Brisbane but is located on the pacific coastline. Cairns was connected to the Queensland railway network in 1924. The population in 1890 was approximately 2,800 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall took three years to build and was designed by Hill and Taylor.



1887 to 1917 Warwick Town Hall, Palmerin Street, Warwick, Queensland

Warwick (founded in 1850) is located 154 km (35 hours walk) inland from Brisbane. Warwick was connected to the Queensland railway network in 1871. There is very little official information available on the population of Warwick. It is claimed that the Town Hall took approximately 30 years to build and was designed by Willoughby Powell.



1891 to 1892 South Brisbane Town Hall, Vulture Street, Brisbane, Queensland

It is claimed that the South Brisbane Town Hall was built within 18 months and was designed by John Smith Murdoch.



1900 Toowoomba Town Hall, Ruthven Street, Toowoomba, Queensland

Toowoomba (founded in 1849) is located 127 km (29 hours walk) inland from Brisbane and was connected to the Queensland railway network in 1867. The population in 1881 was 5,207 and grew to approximately 6,500 people by 1900. It is claimed that the Town Hall took approximately 37 years to build and was designed by Willoughby Powell.



1906 to 1908 Maryborough Town Hall, Kent Street, Maryborough, Queensland

Maryborough (founded in 1847) is located 259 km (59 hours walk) north from Brisbane and 31 km (7 hours walk) from Hervey Bay on the pacific coastline. Maryborough was connected to the Queensland railway network in 1881. The population in 1901 was 10,159 and remained relatively the same by 1908. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within two years, including the removal of the previous buildings, and was designed by Robin Dods.



1911 to 1912 Mackay Town Hall, Sydney Street, Mackay, Queensland

Mackay (founded in 1862) is located 719 km (161 hours walk) north from Brisbane but also located on the pacific coastline. Maryborough was connected to the Queensland railway network in 1885. The population in 1912 was 5,141 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by Arthur Rigby.



1914 Townsville Town Hall, Flinders Street, Townsville, QLD - DEMOLISHED 1978

Townsville (founded in 1864) is located 1,102 km (247 hours walk) north from Brisbane but also located on the pacific coastline. Townsville was connected to the Queensland railway network in 1882. The population in 1911 was 15,731 people. Little information is available on the build time of the Townsville Town Hall designed by Queensland Government Architects Office. The Town Hall was demolished in 1978 due to a fire that destroyed the building in 1974.



1920 to 1930 Brisbane City Hall, Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Queensland

The Brisbane Town Hall is claimed to have taken 10 years to build and believed to be the second largest construction project in Australia at the time, after the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Town Hall was primarily designed by Thomas R. Hall and George Prentice. It is claimed that the design is based on the Roman Pantheon and Venice's St Marks Campanile.



4. WESTERN AUSTRALIA

This chapter consists of Town Halls claimed to be founded in Western Australia between 1870 and 1911, from the capital city Perth including Fremantle and the regional cities Albany, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and York.

Originally named New Holland, Western Australia became Australia's fourth and largest state when Britain claimed it in 1827. Western Australia began with a convict supported settlement at King George III Sound, that became Albany on the southwestern coast, because of fears that the French would colonise the area.

Perth was established in 1829 following exploration of the Swan River Colony. The population of European settlers had reached approximately 1,500 by 1832 and had only increased to 5,886 people by 1850 due to the difficulty of clearing land to grow crops, mainly around the southwestern coastline cities of Bunbury, Augusta and Albany.

Initially a free settlement Western Australia became a penal colony in 1850 and by 1868 (when transportation ended) over 9,000 convicts had been transported to Western Australia, greatly outnumbering the 7,300 free settlers. Western Australia's population growth was very slow until the discovery of gold around Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie in the 1890s which is the period when most of the Town Halls were founded.

Western Australia's capital and largest city is Perth located on the Indian Ocean. The Swan River Colony set up Fremantle as the entry port to the city, Perth as the administrative and military centre, and Guildford (located further up the Swan River) as the loading point for agricultural produce. Perth's population was about 1,940 people in 1850 and it is claimed to have increased to around 3,000 by 1870 when the Perth Town Hall was founded.

Economic prosperity from the gold rushes brought a significant increase in population. Perth's population went from 8,447 in 1891 to 27,553 by 1901.

Western Australia's railway network commenced in 1879 when the Department of Works and Railways was established. Extensive network railway lines were built to service the wheatbelt and reached the gold rush by the 1890s.

1867 to 1870 Perth Town Hall, Hay Street, Perth, WA

It is claimed that the Perth Town Hall was built within three years and was designed by James Manning and Richard Roach Jewell. The official narrative states that the Town Hall was constructed by convict labour and free men.



1885 to 1886 Fremantle Town Hall, William Street, Perth, WA

Fremantle (founded in 1829) is located 19 km (4 hours walk) from Perth but located on the Indian Ocean coastline. The Perth to Fremantle railway was opened in 1881. The population in 1885 was approximately 5,000 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within 18 months, was designed by Grainger and D'Ebro and was constructed by convict labour.



1886 to 1888 Albany Town Hall, York St, Albany, WA

Albany (founded in 1826) is located 410 km (92 hours walk) from Perth but located on the south coast of Western Australia coastline. The Great Southern Railway from Albany to Perth was opened in 1889. The population in 1888 was approximately 1,200 people, which grew to 2,665 by 1891. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within two years and designed by Henderson and Marriot of Adelaide.



1907 Geraldton Town Hall, , Geraldton, WA

Geraldton (founded in 1871) is located 411 km (92 hours walk) north from Perth but is located on the Indian Ocean coastline. Geraldton was connected to the Western Australia railway network in 1879. Little information is available on the population of Geraldton but it was likely to be around 2,500 in 1900, rising to 5,972 in 1947. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within six months and designed by the architectural firm Oldham and Cox.



1907 Midland Town Hall, Great Eastern Highway, Midland, WA

It is claimed that the Midland Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Richard M. Hamilton and Frederick W. Upton.



1908 Kalgoorlie Town Hall, Hannan Street, Kalgoorlie, WA

Kalgoorlie (founded in 1893) is located 590 km (132 hours walk) inland from Perth and 386 km (87 hours walk) from Esperance on the south coast of Western Australia coastline. The Eastern Goldfields Railway connected Kalgoorlie to the Western Australia network in 1896. The population of Kalgoorlie in 1901 was 4,793 and was approximately 7,000 people (mainly miners) in 1908. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within 15 months and designed by C. W. James and Tom Roberts.



1908 Boulder Town Hall, Burt Street, Kalgoorlie, WA

Boulder, a suburb of Kalgoorlie, was connected to the Western Australia railway network with the opening of a tram line to Kalgoorlie in 1897. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and designed by architect A. O. Wilson.



1911 York Town Hall, Avon Terrace, York, WA

York (founded in 1831) is located 97 km (22 hours walk) inland from Perth. The Perth to York railway opened in 1885. Exact, or even estimates, of York's population are not available for 1911. The population of the Shire of York in 2016 was 3,606. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Wright, Powell and Cameron.



5. VICTORIA

This chapter consists of Town Halls claimed to be founded in Victoria between 1855 and 1901, including 20 from the capital city Melbourne that was founded in 1835. In addition to Melbourne's are the Town Halls from regional gold rush cities Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine and other regional cities including Geelong, Ararat, St Arnaud, Clunes, Buninyong and Caulfield.

Considering its' closeness to Sydney and Tasmania it is odd that Victoria and its' capital city, Melbourne was not founded or settled until 1835, some 47 years after the First Fleet. Named after Queen Victoria, Victoria is the smallest mainland state but has the second largest population. Victoria, like Queensland, was initially a part of New South Wales until its' separation in 1851. Victoria's independence from New South Wales was almost immediately followed by the discovery of gold near Ballarat and Bendigo. The gold rush grew the Victorian population from 76,000 in 1850 to 540,000 by 1860. It is claimed that between 1851 and 1860 Victoria produced 20 million ounces of gold, a third of the world's gold at the time.

The official narrative claims that a couple of British settlements preceded the founding of Melbourne in 1835. It is claimed that Melbourne was founded by John Batman, a grazier, entrepreneur and explorer from Tasmania who it is claimed formed a Treaty with the local indigenous community to settle in Melbourne. Known briefly as Batmania, the settlement was named Melbourne in 1837 and became the states' largest and most populace city. Melbourne boomed as one of the wealthiest cities in the world due to the Victorian gold rushes and briefly served as the Australian seat of government before Canberra became the capital of Australia in 1927.

Tremendous population growth occurred in Melbourne between 1850 (approximately 20,000 people) and 1880 (approximately 280,000) when many government buildings and infrastructure projects were constructed, as well as the Town Hall's in this chapter. By 1890 "Marvellous Melbourne's" population had reached around 490,000. Boom was followed by bust in the 1890s that led to an economic depression and banking crisis in 1893 effectively ending construction.

Victoria's railway network spread throughout the state from the late 1850s. Victoria's first railway between Melbourne and Sandridge (Port Melbourne was constructed in 1854).

1855 Geelong Town Hall, Gheringhap Street, Geelong, Victoria

Geelong (founded in 1836) is located 82 km (11 hours walk) southwest from Melbourne but also located on the Port Phillip Bay. The Melbourne to Geelong railway was opened in 1857. The population in 1855 was approximately 23,000 people. The Town Hall's initial stage was built within one year and was designed by Joseph Reed.



1859 to 1865 Bendigo Town Hall, Hargreaves Street, Bendigo

Bendigo (founded in 1852) is located 159 km (36 hours walk) inland and north from Melbourne and was connected to the Victorian railways in 1862. The population in 1859 was recorded as 28,928 people due to the discovery of gold in 1851. It is claimed that the Town Hall's initial stage was built within six years and was designed by Bendigo's Town Clerk, George Avery Fletcher.



1859 St Kilda Town Hall, Grey & Barkly Street, Melbourne DEMOLISHED 1930

It is claimed that the St Kilda Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Sydney W. Smith, the first surveyor on the St Kilda Road Board.



1860 to 1869 Phase 1 Ballarat Town Hall, Sturt Street, Ballarat, Victoria

Ballarat (founded in 1838) is located 119 km (27 hours walk) inland from Melbourne and was connected to the Victorian railways in 1862. The population in 1860 had dropped to around 23,000 from its peak of almost 60,000 recorded in 1858. The growth and subsequent fall in population is attributed to gold rush in 1851. It is claimed that the Town Hall's Phase 1 was constructed over nine years and was designed by architect Charles D. Cuthbert.

Interesting building method?



1870 to 1872 Phase 2 Ballarat Town Hall, Sturt Street, Ballarat, Victoria

It is claimed that the Town Hall's Phase 2 was constructed within two years and was designed J. J. Lorenz (exterior), H. R. Caselli (interior) and Percy Oakden who oversaw the project.

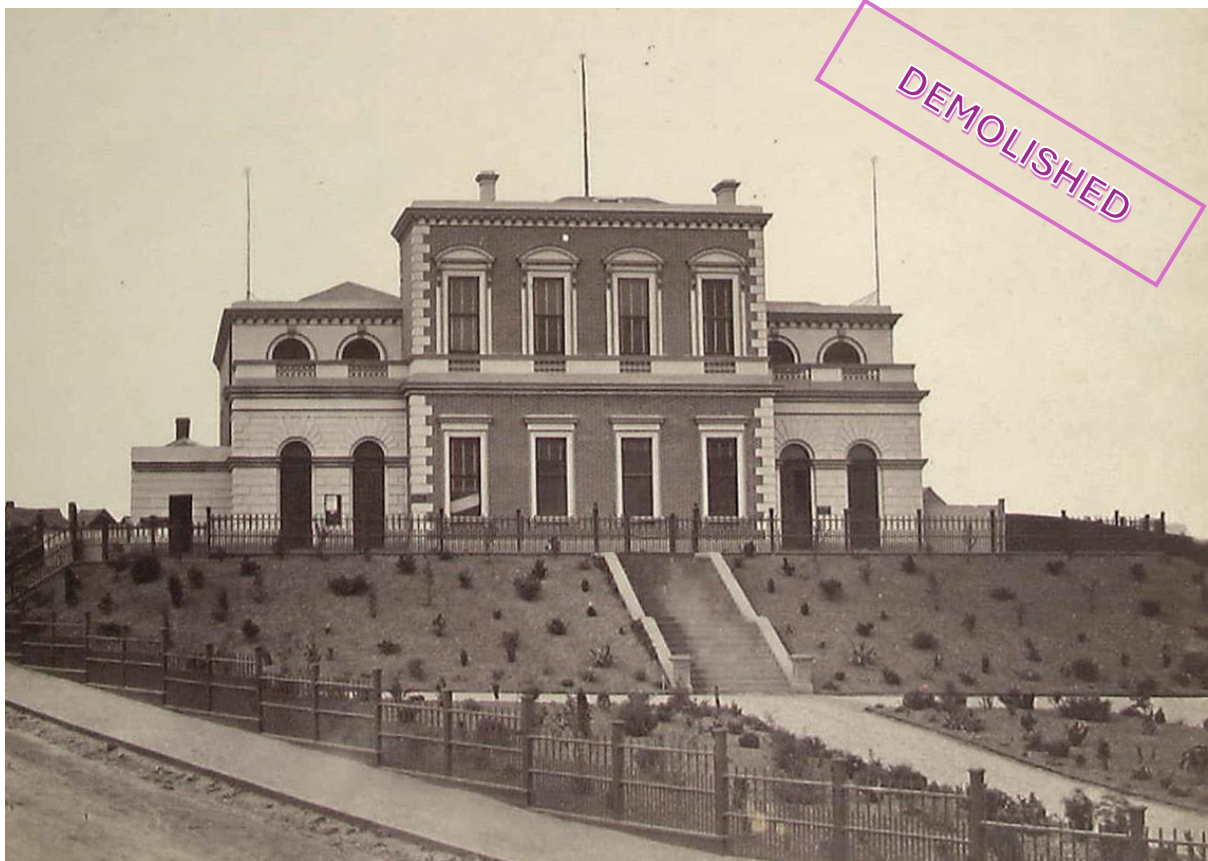


1870 to 1872 Phase 2 Ballarat Town Hall, Sturt Street, Ballarat, Victoria



1861 Ballarat East, Barkly Street, Ballarat East, Victoria - DEMOLISHED 1946

Ballarat East, a suburb of Ballarat, was connected to the Western Australia railway network with the opening of a Ballarat East to Buninyong railway line in 1889. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and designed by architect Charles D. Cuthbert.



1861 Prahran Town Hall, Greville Street, Melbourne, Victoria - FIRE 1914

It is claimed that the Prahran Town Hall was built within six months and designed by architects Crouch and Wilson. The narrative states that the Hall was added to in 1888 and the clock tower, designed by Charles D'Ebro, was added in 1890.



1867 to 1870 Melbourne Town Hall, Swanson Street, Melbourne, Victoria

Melbourne was founded by free settlers from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmanian) in 1835 and officially incorporated as a town in 1842. It is claimed that the Melbourne 1st Town Hall was built in 1851 and demolished in 1867. It is claimed that the current Town Hall was built within three years and was designed by Joseph Reed and Barnes. In 1925 a fire destroyed a large part of the Town Hall, the auditorium and the pipe organ.



1867 to 1870 Melbourne Town Hall, Swanson Street, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Melbourne Town Hall's original organ was built by Hill and Son (of England) in 1872. The organ was destroyed in the 1925 fire and replaced by a new organ constructed by Hill, Norman and Beard in 1929 that was replaced by a new organ in 1995.



1869 to 1870 St Arnaud Town Hall, Napier Street, St Arnaud, Victoria

St Arnaud (founded in 1855) is located 237 km (54 hours walk) inland from Melbourne and was connected to the Victorian railways in 1879. The population in 1861 was 7,898 due mainly to the gold rush in 1855, the population dropped to 1,101 by 1871. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by Charles Vickers.



1869 to 1871 Richmond Town Hall, Bridge Road, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Richmond Town Hall was built within two years and designed by architect Charles Vickers.



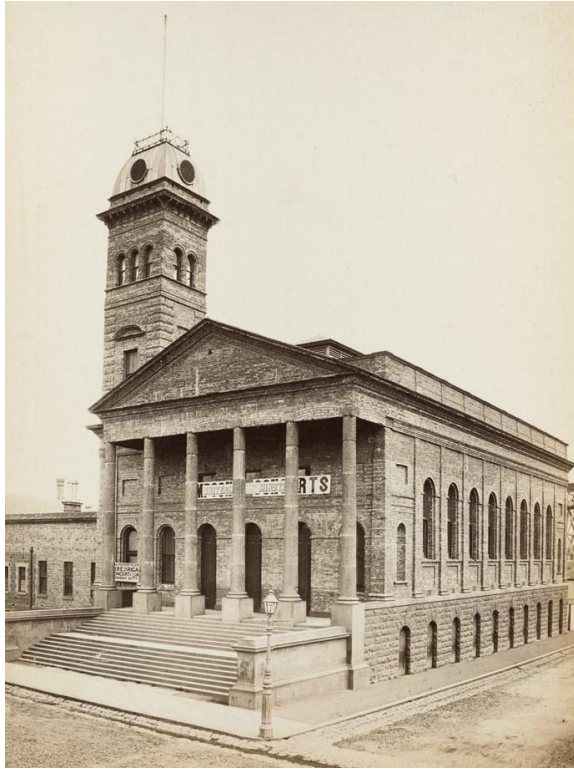
1872 to 1873 Clunes Town Hall, Bailey Street, Clunes, Victoria - FIRE 1969

Clunes (founded in 1851) is located 142 km (32 hours walk) inland from Melbourne and was connected to the Victorian railways in 1874. The population in 1871 was 6,068 due mainly to the gold rush in 1850, the population dropped to 5,811 by 1881. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by Percy Oakden.



1873 & 1887 Fitzroy Town Hall, Napier Street, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that Stage 1 of the Fitzroy Town Hall was built within one year and designed by W. J. Ellis. It is claimed that Stage 2 was built within three years, was designed by George Johnson and added municipal offices, a police station and a courthouse.



1873 by W. J. Ellis



1887 by George Johnson



1875 to 1876 Hotham Town Hall, Queensbury Street, North Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Hotham (North Melbourne) Town Hall was built within one year and designed by architect George R. Johnson. The building included a Post Office, Courthouse, Mechanics' Institute and Library.



1876 to 1877 Brunswick Town Hall, Sydney Road, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Brunswick Town Hall was built within one year and designed by Smith and Johnson.



1879 to 1880 South Melbourne Town Hall, Bank Street, South Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the South Melbourne (Emerald Hill) Town Hall was built within one year and designed by architect Charles Webb. The Town Hall housed the Council, Public Hall, Mechanics' Institute, Library, Post and Telegraph Department, Police Department, Courthouse and Fire Brigade. Really?



1879 to 1880 South Melbourne Town Hall, Bank Street, South Melbourne, Victoria

Council amalgamations in the 1990s made the Town Hall redundant. In 2020 the building was declared unsafe, and the remaining tenants had to evacuate the premises.



A \$65 million project to refurbish the historic Town Hall into a performance venue for the Australian National Academy of Music is anticipated to be completed by 2026.



1884 to 1886 Essendon Town Hall, Mt Alexander Road, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Essendon Town Hall was built in 1879 to 1880 (one year) for the Mechanics' Institute (designed by John James Clark) before being converted from 1884 to 1886 (two years) to house the Town Hall, designed by Wilson and Beswicke.



1882 Port Melbourne Town Hall, Bay Street, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Port Melbourne (originally Sandridge) Town Hall was built in within one year and was designed by J. J. Wild.



1885 to 1886 Brighton Town Hall, Wilson Street, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Brighton Town Hall was built in within one year and was designed by Wilson and Beswicke.



1885 to 1886 Malvern Town Hall, High Street, Melbourne, Victoria - CLOSED 1972

It is claimed that the Malvern Town Hall was built within one year, following 19 years of planning. The Town Hall was designed by Wilson and Beswicke but by the 1920s it was deemed inadequate for the growing municipality's needs.



1885 to 1887 Collingwood Town Hall, Hoodle Street, Abbotsford, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Collingwood Town Hall was built in approximately two years and was designed by architect George R. Johnson.



1886 to 1887 Buninyong Town Hall, Learmouth Street, Buninyong, Victoria

Buninyong (founded in 1841) is located 114 km (26 hours walk) inland from Melbourne and 11 km (2.5 hours walk) from Ballarat and was connected to the Victorian railways in 1889. The population in 1881 was 1,183 due mainly to the gold rush in Ballarat. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy.



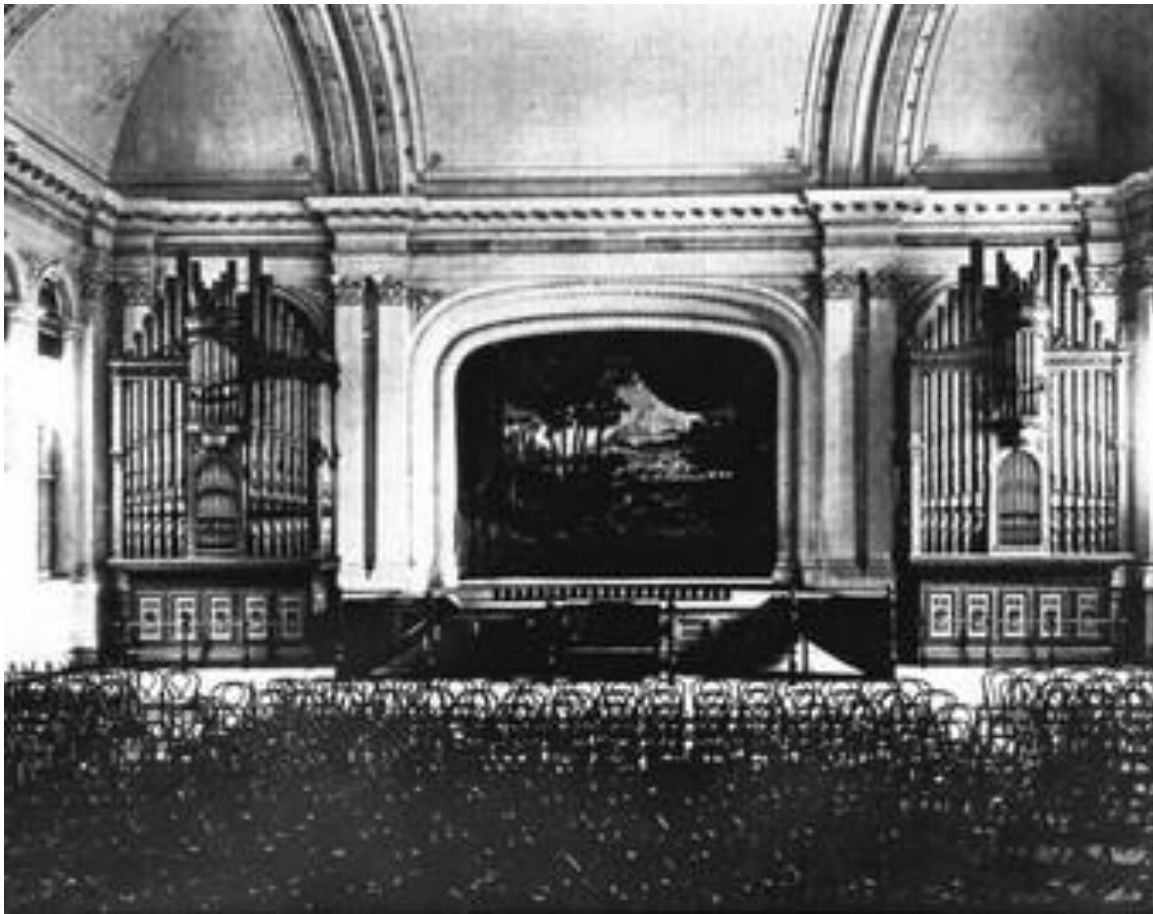
1888 to 1890 Hawthorn Town Hall, Burwood Road, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Hawthorn Town Hall was built in approximately two years and was designed by architect John Beswicke.



1888 to 1890 St Kilda Town Hall, Carlisle Street, Melbourne, Victoria - FIRE 1991

It is claimed that the St Kilda Town Hall was built within approximately two years and was designed by architect William Pitt.



1888 to 1891 Northcote Town Hall, High Street, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Northcote Town Hall was built within three years and was designed by George Raymond Johnson.



1890 Dandenong Town Hall, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria - CLOSED 1998

Little information is available on the build duration of the Dandenong Town Hall designed by George Raymond Johnson.



1890 Glen Eira Town Hall, Hawthorn Road, Caulfield, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Glen Eira (Caulfield Shire Hall) Town Hall, designed by Alexander Rankin, was completed in 1890 and added to in 1891.



1891 Camberwell Town Hall, Inglesby Road, Melbourne, Victoria - DEMOLISHED 1972

Little information is available on the build duration of the Camberwell Town Hall, designed by architect James Gall. The Town Hall was sold in 1972 because the civic offices relocated, and the building was demolished to make way for a new development.



1893 to 1895 Preston Town Hall, High Street, Melbourne, Victoria - DEMOLISHED 1962

It is claimed that the Preston Town Hall was built within two years and was designed by architects Birtwistle and Scanlan. The 1893 financial crash prevented the clock tower from being built and the building suffered damage in a 1947 fire. The Town Hall was demolished due to the 1947 fire damage and its inadequacy in accommodating the growing population.



1898 to 1899 Ararat Town Hall, Barkly Street, Ararat, Victoria - CLOSED 1979

Ararat (founded by Chinese miners in 1856) is located 209 km (47 hours walk) inland from Melbourne and known for the former Ararat Lunatic Asylum built 1865 to 1867. Ararat was connected to the Victorian railways in 1875. The population in 1861 was 1,476, growing to 5,214 by 1881 but declining to around 3,000 in 1898. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built in just over one year and was designed by Molly and Smith of Ballarat.



1898 to 1899 Ararat Town Hall, Barkly Street, Ararat, Victoria - CLOSED 1979



Fountain with Griffins



1898 Castlemaine Town Hall, Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine, Victoria - FIRE 2014

Castlemaine (founded in 1851) is located 129 km (9 hours walk) inland and north from Melbourne and was connected to the Victorian railways in 1862. The population in 1891 was approximately 7,000. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by Wilkinson and Permewan.



1901 Kensington Town Hall, Bellair Street, Melbourne, Victoria

It is claimed that the Kensington Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by architect Evander McIver.



6. SOUTH AUSTRALIA

This chapter consists of Town Halls claimed to be founded in South Australia between 1860 and 1891, mainly from the capital city Adelaide (founded in 1836), but also including notable regional towns including Mount Gambier, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Kadina and Quorn.

The state of South Australia was founded at the same time as the creation of the capital city Adelaide in 1836. South Australia settlement began as a free colony, meaning it was not a penal colony for convicts. Free settlers were attracted based on the political, economic, civil and religious freedoms offered by South Australia. The First Fleet of South Australia consisted of nine ships that carried 636 free settlers and government officials to Kangaroo Island arriving in 1836 after an 8-month voyage.

South Australia's capitol and largest city is Adelaide located on the Great Australian Bight/Southern Ocean. Adelaide's population by 1860 when the first Town Hall in Hindmarsh was built is given as 17,933. Adelaide's population is claimed to have grown to 150,524 by 1891 although census records are difficult to find and contradict each other. For reference South Australia's total population is given as 310,426 people in 1890.

The South Australian Railways (SAR) network commenced operations in 1854, just 17 years after the first settlers in the state. The first railway in South Australia was a horse drawn line that ran from Goolwa to Port Elliott connecting the River Murray to the Southern Ocean seagoing vessels.

The railway between Adelaide, Alice Springs and Darwin started construction in 1878. Work on the extension to Alice Springs began in 1926. Prior to its completion in 1929 this leg of the journey was made on camels which is how it became known as The Ghan, after the Afghanistan camels that were used. The final rail link to Darwin was completed in 2003.

1860 Hindmarsh Town Hall, Port Road, Adelaide, SA

It is claimed that the Hindmarsh Town Hall was built in five key stages starting in 1860, later additions take the completion to 1936. The Town Hall was designed by architect Chris Smith.



1863 to 1866 Adelaide Town Hall, King William Street, Adelaide, SA

It is claimed that the Adelaide Town Hall was built in approximately three years and was considered the largest municipal building south of the Equator at the time. The Town Hall was designed by Edmund Wright and Edward J. Woods. Townsend Duryea's famous panorama of 1865 was taken from the Albert Tower. The clock was installed in 1935.

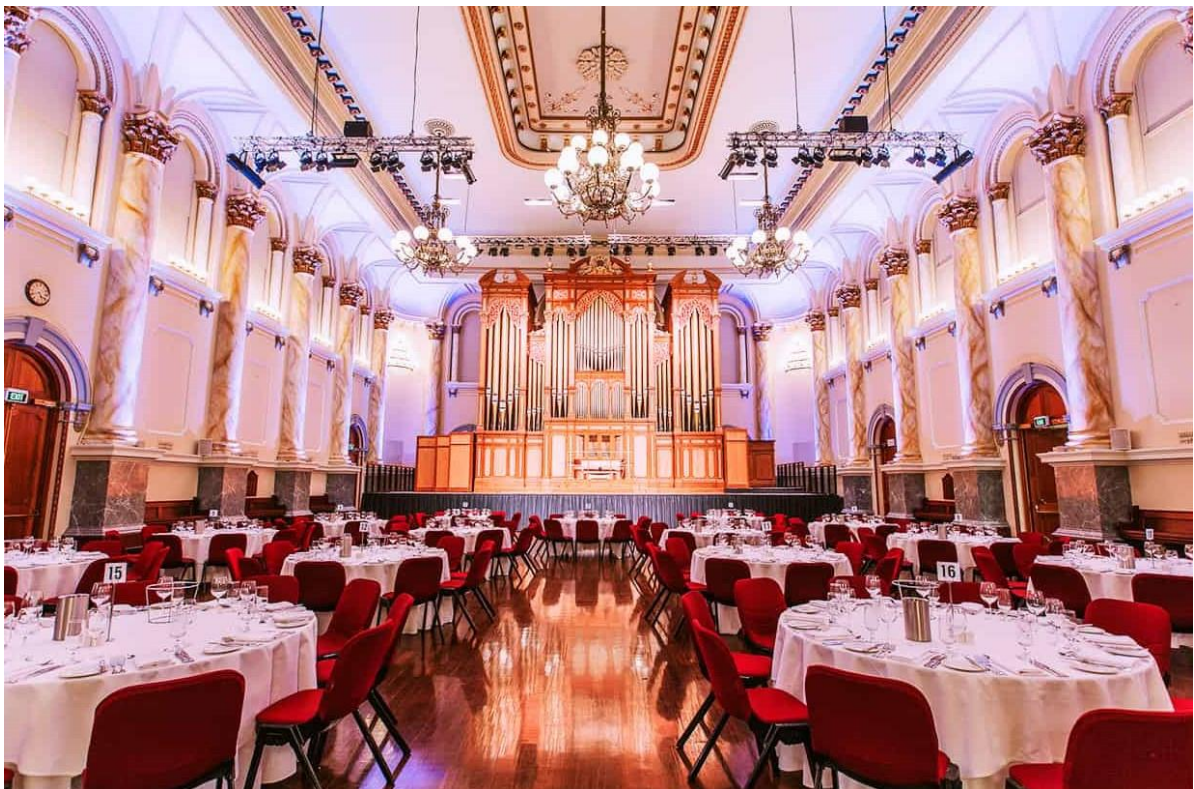


1863 to 1866 Adelaide Town Hall, King William Street, Adelaide, SA



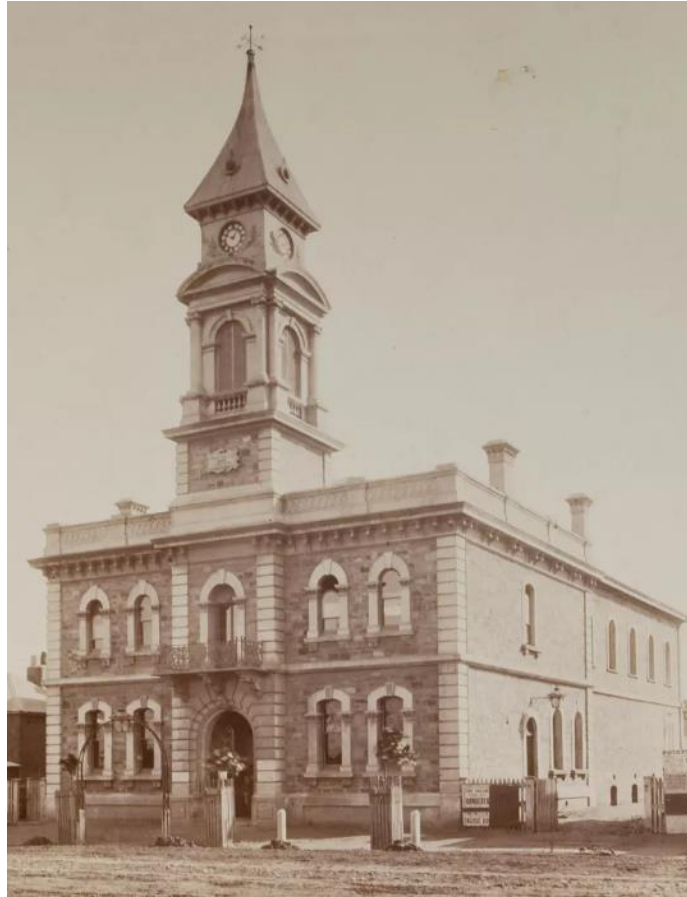
1863 to 1866 Adelaide Town Hall, King William Street, Adelaide, SA

The organ, constructed by William Hill and Son of England, was revealed at a concert in 1877 and has quite a convoluted story.



1865 to 1866 Port Adelaide Town Hall, Saint Vincent Street, Adelaide, SA

It is claimed that the Port Adelaide Town Hall was built within 14 months and was designed by Edmund Wright and Edward J. Woods.



1875 to 1877 Glenelg Town Hall, Moseley Square, Adelaide, SA

It is claimed that the Glenelg Town Hall was built within two years and was designed by Edmund Wright.



1880 Kadina Town Hall, Taylor Street, Kadina, SA

Kadina (founded in 1861) is located 149 km (34 hours walk) north from Adelaide, but only 9 km (2 hours walk) from Wallaroo, on the Spencer Gulf. Kadina was connected to the South Australian railways in 1878. The population in 1875 was around 20,000, mostly made up of copper miners, but is only 4,666 as in 2021. The Town Hall is claimed to have been constructed in stages from 1880 to 1903 and was designed by John Gaskell.



1881 to 1883 Norwood Town Hall, The Parade, Adelaide, SA

It is claimed that the Norwood Town Hall was built within two years, replacing a previous hall built in 1859, and was designed by Alfred Wells. The clock was installed in 1890, and the larger concert hall was added between 1914 and 1918.



1882 to 1883 Mount Gambier Town Hall, Commercial Street East, Mount Gambier, SA

Mount Gambier (founded in 1854) is located 437 km (98 hours walk) south from Adelaide and 28 km (6 hours walk) from Port MacDonnell on the Great Australian Bight. Mount Gambier was connected to the South Australian railways in 1887. The population in 1886 was approximately 2,500 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall was officially opened in 1869 but constructed within one year in 1882 and was designed by J. J. Barrow.



1884 Port Pirie Town Hall, Ellen & Alexander Street, Port Pirie, SA - DEMOLISHED 1925

Port Pirie (founded in 1845) is located 216 km (49 hours walk) north from Adelaide and is located on the Spencer Gulf. Port Pirie was connected to the South Australian railways in 1875. The population in 1881 was less than 1,000, and by 1891 it was estimated to be around 4,000 people, mostly men. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by architectural firm English and Soward. The Town Hall was demolished in 1925 because it was deemed structurally unsound and too small for the towns increasing population (approximately 12,500 residents).



1886 to 1887 Port Augusta Town Hall, Commercial Road, Port Augusta, SA

Port Augusta (founded in 1852) is located 298 km (67 hours walk) north from Adelaide and is located on the Spencer Gulf. Port Augusta was connected to the South Australian railways in 1878. The population in 1878 was around 2,000 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year and was designed by architectural firm Black and Hughes of Adelaide.



1891 Quorn Town Hall, Railway Terrace, Quorn, SA

Quorn (founded in 1878) is located 311 km (70 hours walk) north from Adelaide and 39 km (8.5 hours walk) from Port Augusta on the Spencer Gulf. Quorn was connected to the South Australian railways in 1879. Little information is available on the population in 1891, Quorn's population in 2016 was around 1,230 people. It is claimed that the Town Hall was built within one year in 1891 but officially opened in 1887. Designed by architect F. W. Dancker, the Hall was damaged by fire in 1944 and rebuilt by 1946.



7. NORTHERN TERRITORY

This chapter consists of the Town Hall founded in the Northern Territory in 1883 in the capital city Darwin (formerly Palmerston) that was settled in 1869. Palmerston became Darwin when the Commonwealth took over administration of the Northern Territory in 1911.

It is claimed that the Palmerston Town Hall (later known as Darwin's Old Town Hall) was built within one year between 1882 and 1883 and designed by John George Knight. The Town Hall was left in ruins after the devastating cyclone in 1974. The ruins on Smith Street, Darwin are accessible today.

The first train service in the North Territory was a 509 km (316 mile) railway line between Palmerston and the Adelaide River that commenced operations in 1888. This railway line closed in 1976.

1883 Palmeston Town Hall, Smith St, Darwin CYCLONE 1974



